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TELEGRAM

May 05, 2004

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 1436 - ROUTINE)
TAGS: ELAB, PHUM, PGOV, PREL, SOCI, CVIS
Captions: None
Subject: LABOR CONDITIONS REPORT DELIVERED TO PRESIDENTIAL COURT
Ref: None

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 01436

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: POL
INFO: RSO AMB DCM P/M ECON

DISSEMINATION: POL
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: CDA:RALBRIGHT
DRAFTED: POL:SRADDANT
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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4226
INFO RUEHDI/AMCONSUL DUBAI 3980
RUCPDOC/USDOC WASHDC
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC
RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE

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STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/RA, DRL AND EB/CBA
STATE PASS OPIC/OPIC INTERNATIONAL POLICY DEPARTMENT FOR
VIRGINIA GREEN AND CONSTANCE SHINN
STATE PASS USTR JASON BUNTIN
USDOC FOR ITA/MAC

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ELAB](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [CVIS](#) [GTIP](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: LABOR CONDITIONS REPORT DELIVERED TO PRESIDENTIAL COURT

¶1. SUMMARY: The UAE Ministry of Labor has submitted a new 14-point recommendation report on workers' rights to the office of the President and the Dubai Executive Council for review. The report's aim is to address the "growing tide of complaints against employers, primarily over unpaid wages and substandard working conditions," according to the local press. This report is different from the long-awaited update to the labor law and related amendments. The Council of Ministers is expected to complete review of the proposed labor law in June or July. END SUMMARY.

¶2. Labour and Social Affairs Undersecretary Dr. Khalid Al Khazraji told the press that the MOL's recommendations include measures to allow workers to form unions to protect their rights, as well as to penalize companies that fail to meet labor rules on pay and working conditions. These penalties could include fines, referral to a judicial committee, increased monitoring by the ministry, and restrictions on further dealings with the ministry. Employers who fail to comply would be forced to correct their ways before licenses will be renewed. Problem companies would also be required to pay larger bank guarantees for each foreign worker before receiving ministry approval.

¶3. The report also proposes to create a judicial committee to look into group labor disputes, and to increase the powers of labor inspectors and labor relations departments to better monitor work conditions and carry out arbitration more effectively. The proposal also aims to close loopholes that lead to "visa trading" by mandating that employers make a specific job offer to a potential foreign employee before the issuance of a work permit. Employers would be required to submit details of the job along with the application of the permit.

¶4. According to press reports, the MOL also plans to create a national health and occupation safety agency, comprised of officials from the Ministry of Health, the Civil Defence Department, and UAE civic bodies, with the assistance of the International Labor Organization (ILO). The agency, which will serve in both executive and consultative roles, will ensure that safety rules in the workplace are being met.

ALBRIGHT